

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 CAB-02 DOTE-00

FAA-00 AGR-05 PA-01 PRS-01 /070 W

----- 086151

R 181215Z DEC 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3723

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 1006

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELTN ECON ET

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION

REF: ASMARA 1005 (DTG 171330Z DEC 75)

1. AS PART OF WEEK-LONG SEMINAR OF DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT INDUSTRY (CITED PARA 5 REFTTEL), SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION ON DEC. 17 WAS TRANSPORTATION. AS IS WELL KNOWN TO OBSERVERS OF ERITREAN ECONOMIC SITUATION, TRANSPORTATION IS MOST ESSENTIAL SINGLE ELEMENT IN ECONOMIC EQUATION AT THIS TIME.

2. REP OF EAL CLAIMED THAT WHEN NEW SCHEDULES ARE COMPLETED
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MARCH 1, EAL EXPECTS TO INCREASE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

IN AND OUT OF ASMARA. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT CONTRASTS WITH EAL
DECISION NOV. 1, 1975 TO REDUCE BOTH INCOMING AND OUTGOING INTER-
NATIONAL FLIGHTS.

3. REP OF THE STATE-OWNED RAILWAY STATED THAT ALTHOUGH MASSAWA-
AGORDAT RAILROAD IS NOW RUNNING ONLY MASSAWA TO ASMARA, THEY
ARE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES. WITHOUT
MENTIONING LEVELS OF TONNAGE HANDLED, RR REP DID SAY THAT THEIR
LOCOMOTIVES ARE OLD AND NOT CAPABLE OF PULLING MORE THAN FIVE
LOADED CARS. PRESENTLY RR IS LOSING MONEY ON EVERY TRIP, PRIMAR-
ILY BECAUSE OF HIGH FUEL COSTS. HE CLAIMED THE FUEL ALONE COST
MORE THAN REVENUES THAT COULD BE GAINED FROM 5-CAR TRAIN.

4. MOST HEATED EXCHANGE DURING SESSION CONCERNED DISPUTE BETWEEN
EPMG ROAD TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION (RTA) AND ERITREAN
TRUCKERS ASSOCIATION. RTA ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO ESTABLISH
SCHEDULE OF FREIGHT RATES FOR TRUCKERS AND ALSO TO INITIATE
LIST FOR UTILIZATION OF ALL PRIVATE TRUCKS TO TRANSPORT GOODS
THROUGHOUT ERITREA. ALTHOUGH FORMER ISSUE DID NOT SPARK MUCH
CONTROVERSY, UTILIZATION SCHEDULING ISSUE RESULTED IN HOT DEBATE.
UNDER SCHEDULING SYSTEM, ALL PRIVATE TRUCKS OPERATING IN ERITREA
WILL BE LISTED IN FIXED ORDER, AND AS FREIGHT FOR VARIOUS DEST-
INATIONS BECOMES AVAILABLE, RTA WILL ASSIGN TRUCKS IN THEIR ORDER
ON THIS LIST WITHOUT REGARD TO OWNERSHIP TO CARRY FREIGHT.

5. WHILE TACTFULLY AVOIDING FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN ABOUT INSURGENT
ACTION AGAINST ROAD TRANSPORTATION, REPS OF LARGER TRUCKING FIRMS
OBJECTED TO SCHEDULING SYSTEM, AS THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED TO BOTH
CONTRACTING TO CARRY FREIGHT AND HAVING THEIR TRUCKS AVAILABLE
FOR THAT PURPOSE. LARGE COMPANIES WHICH HAVE BEEN PLYING THE
MORE SECURE ROUTES, I.E., ASMARA-MASSAWA AND ASMARA-ADI UGRI,
MAY NOW BE REQUIRED TO TRAVEL MORE HAZARDOUS ROUTES TO
KEREN AND WESTERN LOWLANDS. ALLEGED IMPETUS FOR INITIATING SCHED-
ULING SYSTEM WAS EPMG CONCERN FOR TRANSPORT OF OILSEEDS PRODUCED
IN HUMERA TO ASMARA FOR EXPORT. CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO
TRANSPORT THIS CROP VIA GONDAR-AXUM-ADI UGRI-ASMARA. HUMERA
OILSEED PROBLEM IS GENERALLY THOUGHT TO BE CAMOUFLAGE FOR LARGER
PROBLEM OF OBTAINING TRUCKS FOR MORE HAZARDOUS FREIGHT RUNS.

6. THE QUESTION OF INTER-CITY BUS TRAVEL AND OF COASTAL SHIPPING
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WAS NOT DISCUSSED IN THIS SESSION.
WAUCHOPE

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NNN

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